GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2354
ANSWERED ON:13.03.2006
AGRO BIO DIVERSITY
Joshi Shri Pralhad Venkatesh;Nayak Smt. Archana

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of species identified under the bio-diversity category;

(b) whether their number has declined due to pollution, poaching, illegal trade etc.

(c) if so, the details thereof along with the steps to check this declining trend ;

(d) whether a national conference on bio-diversity was held recently;

(e) if so, the details of discussion held and decisions arrived at?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) The total number of identified plant and animal species at present stands at 45,469 and 89,593 respectively;

(b)&(c) Yes, Sir. As per the Red Databook on Mammalia, the number of Threatened species has risen from 77 in 1994 to 144 in January 2006. As for the floral species, there are 1250 species categorized as Threatened in the various volumes of the `Red Databook of Indian Plants`. The Red Databooks on faunal and floral species are prepared taking into account the criteria laid down in The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and Convention of International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES).

The regulatory and promotional steps to safeguard the biodiversity of the country comprise enlarging the Protected Area Network; setting up of National Biodiversity Authority and State Bio-diversity Boards; compliance with guidelines of IUCN and CITES; and increasing the number of Biosphere Reserves; designating Ecologically Sensitive Zones; and Conservation and Community Reserves under The Environment Protection Act and The Wildlife Protection Act respectively; and scaling up the number of identified wetlands.

(d) & (e) A National Conference on Agro Bio-diversity was held by National Bio-diversity Authority between February 12 - 15, 2006, at Chennai. Some of the key decisions taken relate to the need to sensitize administrators and policy makers on sustainable use of biodiversity; ensure peoples` participation for sustainable conservation of agro-biodiversity; create awareness among children and tribals; utilize biodiversity registers, and other databases; and to test Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) for food, feed, environmental safety, among others.